

“Give Ye Them to Eat”

By Kirk Orelup

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Please be seated. You make me nervous when you stand. This, of course we know, is Sonia and Andy's anniversary, so I went up to them, and I wished them happy anniversary, and I asked them, “Will you be sharing cake with everybody so that we can celebrate your anniversary?” Wouldn't that be a great idea, if they shared their cake with everybody? But they said, “How will we be able to feed this multitude, with such little bit of cake?” So, I thought, well, the title of the message this morning, “Give You Them to Eat.” Actually, this message comes today from the miracle of the fishes and the loaves. Sonia is already saying no. Not the cake. The fishes and the loaves. So, the story appears twice, twice in the Gospels. There are two events that happened. The first one, and then the second one; they're two separate events. The first time it was 5,000 people fed, the second time it was 4,000 people fed. Matthew and Mark both record both events. Luke and John only record the first event, so we're going to pick the Gospel according to Mark, which tells both stories; we're going to go through both events, and see what they have in common, and see what they have in difference. Regardless, each writer shows—whether it's Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John—they each show that Jesus, after seeing the multitudes of people, the thousands of people who have come to him, having compassion, not wanting to send them away hungry, however, there's scarcely any food to be found, so, Jesus takes what little provisions that the disciples are able to muster, He blesses it, and He has the disciples distribute it to the multitudes. In the end, of course, if you recall the story, there's more leftover—there's more than enough, first of all, for everybody that's there, and there's more left over, in the end, than when they began.

So, let's look at the first example in Mark, chapter six, and I'm just going to read through these, because that's the best way to do it.

Mark 6:35-44 *And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, **Give ye them to eat.** And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? He saith unto them, **How many loaves have ye? go and see.** And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.*

Now, this is the first encounter, the first event, I should say. And, then, the second one appears in Mark chapter eight. And, I'll read this one too. I know it sounds redundant, but there are certain similarities and certain differences. And, it's like that picture game in Highlights magazine where you look at the two and you try to find out—what's that called? Spot the differences. Yeah, that was the name for it. Okay, so, we'll do that today.

Mark 8:1-9 *In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, **I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their own houses,***

*they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? And he asked them, **How many loaves have ye?** And they said, Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.*

Now, if we're reading this for the first time, we're asking ourselves, "What is the example that Jesus is setting, here, for us?" We could say, "Yes, He's telling us to have compassion on people, and, we should feed the hungry," and, I think these are all good things. But, He also says in another place, "**You seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life.**" (John 6:26-27) So, we know that there must be more to the story than just this. We could also look at what the Jews were expecting: they were also looking for a king, a righteous king to come, and when Jesus came, and He fed the multitudes and they saw that He was sustaining the people, nourishing the people, and, of course, they saw this as a kingship, and with the miracles and such that He was doing, the healings, they recognized that He was of God, but they reveled in the fishes and loaves, they could start to see Him as this King. But, the problem with this is that they had the wrong concept of what a righteous king would be, and the wrong concept of what the Kingdom of God should look like. So, we're going to go through these stories, okay? The two events, and we're going to break them down into categories. And, they're going to go kind of quickly, okay? We're going to look at the similarities and the differences of the two events, and what they mean. And, I will title each category as we go. There are a few of these, as I said, but, consider these the appetizers coming up to the main meal. We're talking about feeding fishes and loaves, and feeding the multitude, fine.

So, **The Setting**: the setting is the multitude is in the desert. Both stories occur in a desert place. Now, when it says desert place, it doesn't mean this arid, dry, sandy place, necessarily. Actually, one says that there was green grass there. The word means that they were in an uninhabitable and desolate place where no food can be found. The deception that has always lived in the eyes of man is it people think that they can always find what they're looking for in this life, right? Whether it's success, prestige, or wealth, indulgences, retail therapy, yoga, organic food—and I like organic food—liberalism or conservatism, gun control, or civil liberties, religious freedom, or spirituality, if it is rooted in the world, then it will never satisfy the soul. The world is the desert place.

So, what is **The Need**? The need is life-sustaining food. That's the next category. As I stated, the world offers no hope, it has no answers, we cannot depend on it, trust in it, rely on it in any way shape or form. Because it is a dead, barren, and unfruitful wasteland, it will not sustain us on our journey. And, this is the need. We are on a journey that we cannot survive without intervention. The disciples realized that the people would need food, but their answer was to send them away, because they were unable, themselves, to supply the need. But, Jesus had compassion on them, and did not want to send them away without feeding them, because He knew that they would faint. And, of course, He meant this in a spiritual sense. Spiritual food.

So, getting to the next point: **The Commission**: feed them. Jesus told his twelve disciples, "Give you them to eat." The disciples rhetorically answered, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?" According to Matthew, actually, it's in chapter twenty, verse two, it says that a penny is about a day's wage for a manual laborer. So, if we were to figure out two hundred pennies is equivalent to about forty weeks, five days a week. In short, two hundred days is almost seven months of wages. Seven months of wages to feed all the people that were there. So, basically, the

disciple said, “Shall we spend seven months of wages to feed them?” They were noting the immensity of the task.

So, then, we see, then, the next Point: **The Dilemma**. That is, we are insufficient. Considering the cost to feed such a crowd, it is no wonder, in chapter eight, they asked, “From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?” It reminds me of what Jesus asked, “Whether it is easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or rise and walk?” (Luke 5:23) In each case, we are insufficient. Only God can heal, only God can forgive sins, and, this is precisely what this story is showing us: we cannot heal damaged Souls, we cannot even heal our own damaged Souls, we cannot forgive sins, we have our own sins that need forgiveness of. We are all sinners in need of a Savior. From whence can we satisfy these men? Those around us, each day, with bread, here, in the wilderness? All that we can give is insufficient for the task. No matter how great the desire is, no matter how much we may have compassion, we don't have the means.

Then we come to **The Solution**: God gives us Grace. I told you this would go kind of fast. #10:21# Our passages use specific numbers: Chapter six speaks of five loaves, two fish, five thousand men, and twelve baskets. Chapter eight has seven loaves, four thousand men, and seven baskets. These are some of the differences between them. In the language of the Bible, these numbers have significance. I would like to take a look at a few of these starting with the number five. How many fingers did God give us on each hand? Five. How many on each foot? We have toes on the foot, yeah. Right. How many gifts did God give to the church? Actually, you should just say five, because you're pretty sure it's going to be right. Five. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). How many senses do we have? Five senses. How many stones—there's some teachers here, so we see, we hear, we smell, we taste, we feel. Okay? How many stones did David take into the battle? Five. Okay. Five is the number of Grace. Five, Grace, five stones, delivered by one, Jesus. He killed Goliath, he got the victory, not by works lest any man should boast. Jesus told the disciples to feed the five thousand. They said, “We are not able.” Jesus told them to gather what they had. In chapter six, they gathered five loaves. Jesus took it, looked up to heaven, he blessed it, and it was more than ample to supply the needs of all, with plenty left over. The miracle shows us that our inefficiency with God, with God's intervention makes us more than sufficient. This is Grace, God's gift to man, God in man. Who must feed them? Jesus. In John 6:35, “And Jesus said unto them I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.”

When we feed them Jesus, we end up with **The Result**: building the Kingdom. After the Five Loaves were dispersed among the 5000, the disciples gathered up twelve baskets of fragments. How many tribes of Israel are there in the Old Testament? twelve. How many disciples did Jesus have? How many stones in the wall of New Jerusalem? Twelve is the number of God's Kingdom.

The Effects: except ye eat of My flesh, Jesus's reference of eating the bread is Covenant language. Jesus invites the people to sit down to eat. The words, sit down, come from the same word used to mean to recline at a table like at a meal. And Jesus takes the bread, looks up to Heaven, gives thanks, breaks it, gives it to His disciples, and they serve it to the people. Of course, we can see that this is a parallel to the Last Supper. We can see this almost descriptively mirroring, looking into Heaven, breaking the bread, blessing it, giving thanks, passing it out. So, Christ sacrificed Himself for the life of the world, and brought us a New Covenant, foreshadowed in this. Yes. In John, six, fifty-one to fifty-three, we'll read this one next:

John 6:51-53 *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

We'll jump down to verse sixty and sixty-one:

John 6:60-61 *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, **Doth this offend you?***

And, down in sixty-six:

John 6:66 *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

What Jesus was saying was that unless we take His life in us, allow His life to live in us, then we can have no life. We know that the disciples understood that He was the source of life, for when Jesus asked them “Will you also go away?” They replied, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” (John 6:67-68) We also know this because, when Jesus told his disciples to give the multitudes food to eat, they said, “From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread, here in the wilderness?” They accepted that, in themselves, there was no life, but, in Christ, there was abundant life. #15:30# However, many others did not share this knowledge. Many believed that they had life in themselves. They trusted that they had Abraham as their father, they claimed to have never been in bondage. They trusted in their own righteousness, through the observation of the Law, but, Jesus revealed their sin, and told them that righteousness was found only in Him. This was the offense. Furthermore, the Jews were expecting God to give them a king who would conquer their enemies, and rule the nation in righteousness. With this in mind, the Jews fully expected someone to rise up from among them and to lead them into this victorious battle against Rome and its Pagan ways, and then restore self-rule in Israel. Then, with its king, Israel would be free to worship God according to the Mosaic Law, where its priests, scribes, elders, people, didn't have to answer to the Pagan Roman rulers or their corrupt puppet Kings like Herod. But, Jesus didn't do what they expected Him to do. The fact is, He led the multitudes, healed the sick, raised the dead, and then they couldn't deny that He was God, but never once, never once did He challenge Romans' rule. He never once spoke out against Herod; not even against Pilate. Instead the only ones He spoke against were His own people. Especially against the elders, scribes, and chief priests; the religious leaders of the day. He went out to the multitudes, and many came to hear His words, but this attracted others, as well, into the crowd. Those religious leaders who led there because of their jealousy and their envy for what he was doing. As it says in Mark, eight, Jesus began to teach them, just a little bit farther down, actually, I don't have the—it's eight, thirty-one, I believe (Mark 8:31)—but Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed. Jesus understood that His greatest opponents weren't the politicians; it wasn't Big Ag, Monsanto, etc., a lot of the things that people are fighting against today, and they're really looking at that and thinking that these are their enemies. But it really was the religious hypocrisy that existed. They love the praises of men, they love being seen of men, they love having authority over others, and they sought the high seat at assemblies. They sought titles and used their titles to keep their power by strategizing, and plotting, and manipulating, and killing, but Christ's kingdom is not of this world, therefore He had nothing to defend.

So, now we look at **The Choice**: condemnation or sanctification. Let's talk about the number—three more numbers, actually, scattered in our stories. Two, four, and the number seven. There were two fish served in chapter six. How many sides are there to a battlefront? You guys are catching on. How many sides on a coin? There's a right hand, and there's the? There's light and there's? There's good and there's? Okay, two represents division, or choices. Jesus hung between how many thieves? And, one cursed him, and one blessed him. When you have two people, the sayings go you have three opinions.

Because everybody has an opinion. Do I go down into the rabbit hole, or not? Do I take the red pill or the green pill? It's all down to choices. Jesus took the two fish; it says he divided them—it uses that word—divided them among the people. Two means division or choice. Jesus said that He didn't bring peace didn't come to bring peace, but a sword (Matthew 10:34). Peace unites, a sword divides. The Word is sharper than a two edged sword. Two represents divisions, choices. So, four. How many corners does the Earth have according to the Bible? Four. On a map we divide it into quadrants of north, south, east, and west. Matter can be divided up into earth, wind, water, and fire. Four represents the Earth. Seven. What you'll learn, mostly, about seven, today, is that it's used in the Bible, probably more than any other number, but, it means sanctification or separation, and completeness, or perfection. Seven lamps, they went seven times around Jericho, played the trumpet seven times, seven days in the week, seven churches in Asia. So, to sum it up, the whole world has to face a choice to accept Christ, or to reject him. Those who reject Him will stand on the left, those who accept Him will stand on His right and enter into his kingdom. The choice is condemnation, or sanctification.

So, now, we're getting to the main course, **The Example:** Jesus broke the bread. As much as He was, and is, the King, his example isn't how to live as a King; His example was how to live as a suffering servant. This, also, perplexed many people. His kingdom is not one in which He conquers all of His physical enemies, but it is one that is won by being conquered by His enemies. The reality is, people challenged His authority. They judged Him after the flesh. They wanted to then bring that judgment to execution, themselves. He was scorned, He was told that He had a devil, meanwhile, they justified themselves and they sought to kill Him, even claiming that they were doing it for God, themselves. Then, in the end, they truly did kill Him. Instead of these stories that we see all the time where the good guy wins, Jesus broke the bread, and surrendered Himself. John four, thirty-four says:

John 4:34 *Jesus saith unto them, **My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.***

His meat—the word meat is another word for food, it is the same word John used to describe bread when he was describing the feeding of the five thousand. This meat was to do the will of Jesus's Father. This is the example that we must do, if we were to learn what is the example that Jesus set for us. Which is, of course, the thing, the examples of Jesus.

So, **The Covenant:** The Covenant, we are the bread. If Jesus was the body, the bread, that was in His life, what is the bread today? First Corinthians, ten, sixteen and seventeen tells us the answer.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

So, we become the body of Christ; we know that we are the body of Christ. If we have the Spirit of God living in us, we must be the body of Christ. If the example of the body of Christ in Jesus' day was that He broke His body for us, what is the example that we should follow today if we make us His body? We must show the Lord's death, in us. Do you remember the musical titled, Jesus Christ Superstar? They're actually redoing it now, they're going to play it on Easter Sunday, I think. That's what I saw, a commercial for it. It was a tragedy. I think He rose again, though. But, died, so it was a tragedy. But, it did have its moments, too, there were some good points in it. Of course, they did refer to the Gospel, on occasion, here and there, you know? And, I remember going to this musical, there was this time when everything was becoming more chaotic, more tumultuous, more unpredictable, and in comes this chorus, it comes melodically over the background singing, and I'll try to do it: "Always thought that I'd be an apostle, sinking in a gentle pool of wine. Then when we retire we can write the Gospel, and they'd

always talk about us when we die.” So, you see the appeal? I just thought I would sit down write the Gospels, sitting in a gentle pool of wine, soaking in the good life, while I reflect, and I muse upon the goodness of God, and His love, and write down these eloquent words, and when I finally ease my way, fade off into the next life, people will fondly and often and affectionately remember me. Wouldn't that be, wouldn't that be awesome? Always thought that I'd be an apostle. Yes, so, it would be easy to say Christ died for me, that I might live. I think that's the way a lot of people look at it. Christ died for me, so that I might live. And there is some truth to it. But, we take it out of context. It is not the Covenant that we have made with Him, this covenant that He has made with us. We must put on Christ; we become his body. First Corinthians, four, eight to thirteen:

1 Corinthians 4:8-13 *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.*

To whom is Paul talking to? Paul is rebuking those Christians, in the churches of the day, not because they reveled in sinful indulgences, but because they lived life in peace and comfort and safety, as though they had already sat upon thrones in Heaven. That's what he says, they reigned as kings. He rebuked them because they live like we live today. Can I say it more plainly than this? We are living a Goldilocks life. I woke up this morning, got out of bed, it was just right. I showered in water that was just right. I put on clothes that fit just right. Heated up breakfast, ate breakfast, it was just right. It was almost porridge, actually, it was oatmeal. It was just right. Got in my car, it was just right. I drove to church where I worshipped with all of you, where I don't have to worry about being persecuted or reviled, or buffeted; I'm not called the filth of the world, or the off-scouring of all things. But, Paul then describes the life of the Apostles, in another place, second Corinthians four, ten, and, actually, right before that, he says:

2 Corinthians 4:8-10 *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

We are the body of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:11 *For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*

Can you say we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake? I cannot. So, he says, in another place, to live is Christ, to die is gain (Philippians 1:21). The apostles had one thing on their calendar and it was death. “Let's see, what I have to do on the schedule, Monday? Turn to it, oh yeah, death. What's for lunch Tuesday? That's right, it's death. It's true. What about next week? Well, if I'm still alive, it's death.” Do you see it now? Kings Agrippa, Festus, they come to Paul in the prison and they say, “Hey, good news, you're free to go!” And he says, “Then I appeal to Caesar.” (Acts 25:11) Death! That was the life of the Apostles. Paul explained, for thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter (Romans 8:36). Almost anyone is willing to stick out their necks

when they think it won't get chopped off. Jonah saw death in preaching to Nineveh, and he fled to Tarshish. But, the only way we're going to build Christ's kingdom is if we're willing to give as Christ gave. I'm sure that many told John the Baptist that he should have kept his head. But, he didn't, because he was compelled to speak the truth in love. This brings me to another point: like Jesus we give, not only the way we live, but, also, what we say. The bread is also the Word of life; the Bible refers to speaking in the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Some people think that it means we have to use sweet words to make the medicine go down, but this is not so. Jesus told them like it is. Jesus said, our example, the most revered people in Jewish Society He called hypocrites and vipers. He told them that their father was the devil. Yes, the words He said were more than difficult to swallow. The Bible says that many were offended at his words. So, what does it mean to speak the truth in love? We are all aware of the deceitfulness of man. We can modify our actions, we can hide our intentions, we can mean evil while we're speaking love, we can be a Judas, we can be a Pharisee. But, regardless of what Jesus said, or how He said it, He always said it because truth is equivalent to love. Have you ever heard the expression, because I love you enough to tell you the truth? Love is not silent; it compels us to speak the truth. This, too, was an example that Jesus left to us. However, when Jonah finally spoke the truth, he rejoiced more in judgment than he did in mercy. There's a quote that I read that I think addresses this, it says, "Truth is never sacrificed for so-called charity, yet it is to be maintained in charity." Whatever we say must be said out of love for God and love for our neighbor. We must speak the truth in love. It is not hostility, but humility, considering ourselves.

Now, let's talk about Thy Kingdom come. Do you want to know the five steps to church growth? I'll cite them now on my website. The five steps for Church growth: 1) Jesus took the bread 2) He looked to Heaven 3) gave thanks 4) break it 5) give it to hungry souls. The more we die, the more Christ is seen in us. The more Christ is seen in us, the more others are fed. The more others are fed, the more the Kingdom grows. There are many thoughts out there on how to grow the church, but many of them only tell you how to grow the church in this life; they don't tell you how to grow God's Kingdom. We must break bread to grow God's Kingdom.

There's a saying in Jerusalem, "Next year, Jerusalem." Every year, they say it, "Next year, Jerusalem." They're waiting for their former glory to be restored to them. Actually, it's a form of denial. They keep saying, "We're waiting on God to do what He's going to do. We're waiting on God to get it right, in order to move us forward, to restore the glory. We're ready, but we're waiting on God." Well, we're guilty of the same thing. We're guilty of the same thing. When we say, "This is the year for growth. Next year, CFC, we're going to have exponential growth. Next year, CFC. Explosion in Ministry, next year, CFC! We're going to be the largest Jesus name Ministry in the world! Next year, CFC!" The only thing that changes is the magnitude of the vision. We are not waiting on God, though; God is waiting on us. He didn't come in the form of man, submit Himself to the hands of sinners, get beaten, suffer, and die on the cross for those who scorned Him just because He wasn't ready to grow the church. He's waiting on us. If we look to our programs, facilities, our strategies, or things that are bringing people in, but, it is not even our job to grow the church. Jesus gathered the multitude, He told us to feed them. And we do that by breaking bread. All we need to do is to break the bread. The reason people don't come to Christ is not because of the building, it's the foundation. The miracle of the fishes and loaves tells us this. It's not the programs, it's not the music, it's not the building, it's not the children's church. Those things are important, we need those things, I'm not saying we don't, but, it's the foundation. There's only one Foundation that can be laid, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). Everything else is not a foundation that can support the Kingdom of God. If we add to, or take away, we corrupt the foundation. We may see some success in this life, but it won't stand the test of Eternity; it won't build the Kingdom of God. This is why Jesus' greatest opponents were, of course, the religious leaders. They knew the Scriptures, but they were compromised by the world. They were invested in this life than they were in the next life. They fought for what they valued here. And the more they did that, they showed that they fought for what

they valued here. That's why it says that it is harder for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (Matthew 19:24). There's power, prestige, and notoriety; they're all part of the earthly kingdom, and not part of the Kingdom that God has established through this. The more people fight for what they have on this earth, the more they show that their kingdom is not of this world. The more we sacrifice what we have in this world for others, the more we show that our hope is in the world to come; the more we show that Christ is more than sufficient to meet the need by the way we live. This also helps us to see why we are often ineffective bread distributors ourselves. I was hoping Hector would be here; I think his job is a bread distributor, he could be the representative for the message. We are ineffective bread distributors, ourselves, when we fear failure, we fear rejection, we fear scorn, or personal loss. When we do that, we fail to speak the truth in love. We hold on to that bread, and then it only rots, like the manna from Heaven did, when the Jews tried to preserve it (Exodus 16:15-20). Our hope is not in this life. We complain that the devil is fighting us, when people oppose us, or when we're forced to make a stand for righteousness, or when someone slaps us on the cheek, or they take our cloak, all those things. But, if you're living the life, then you're not dead. Do you expect the victory over your enemies here? For the good guys to win here? For no more suffering, battles, pain, or tears here? Then, your hope is not in the next life.

What is victory look like for a Christian? Let's see, let's ask Stephen. To him it looked like stones (Acts 7:58). Let's ask James; to him it looked like a sword (Acts 12:2). This is why Paul said if in this life only have we hope in Christ, we would be of all men most miserable (1 Corinthians 15:19). Where is the Justice, where is the Redemption, where's the Deliverance in this life? No, our life is most miserable except for one thing: our hope in the next.

And that brings us to **The Reward**: eternal life. After all, who mocked Jesus, spit on Him, reviled Him, scorned Him, beat Him, and crucified Him? After they all saw their victory; then, and only then, Jesus rose from the dead. This is also our example. It is said that there are only two guarantees in life: death and taxes. Right? You've heard this before? But, for those who have entered into Christ's Covenant, the two guarantees are death and the resurrection. Parrish referenced this last week, actually, when he quoted Mark, ten, when Jesus was speaking to his disciples, "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of;" He said, "and with the baptism that I am baptized with shall ye be baptized." (Mark 10:39) The cup is a consistent, direct reference to the blood of the Covenant, and, similarly, baptism is a reference to death. See Romans 6, and other verses, but, it's death. And, because we drink of that cup, even though we all die, we will all join him in the resurrection. Baptism is just the beginning, it's our entry into the Kingdom of God by death. When we raised to walk in newness of life, it is not our life. At that point, we are all still dead; our Hope remains in the resurrection. Then, one day, He will return, and those who falsely judged Him will stand before Him in judgement. He will call down more than a legion of angels, He will return with ten-thousands of His Saints to fight the enemies of God. He will destroy the Destroyer; He will exalt. Those who were exalted will be made low, and in time, those who rose up against Him in judgement He will condemn. Peter explained, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you," and he goes on to say, "but, rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye shall be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter 4:12-13) Paul continues this thought, when he says, in second Corinthians, four, fourteen to eighteen:

2 Corinthians 4:14-18 *knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace [think bread] might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God [think God's Kingdom]. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of*

glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Would you like to bear a light affliction for today, for an exceeding weight of Glory for eternity? The people around you are in a desert place; they will faint along the way if they don't get food, being spiritual nourishment. Jesus has commanded us, "Give you them to eat." Would you break bread for the sanctification of the Earth? To build the kingdom of God? Will you give them His grace, His truth, His foundation, even His body, which is ourselves? Today, Jesus turns to you and to me, and says, "Give you them to eat." Amen.